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Italy's Aim

In

The World War



BY
HERBERT D. WARD
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ITALY'S AIM IN THE WORLD WAR

BY HERBERT D. WARD,

National Press Club, Washington, D. C.

Italy is new born out of blood travail. It counts hardly half a century of life. Sixty years ago Austria occupied five provinces—Italian in history, in geography, in language and in the will of their inhabitants: Lombardy, Venetia, The Trentino, Julian Venetia and Dalmatia. Lombardy was restored to Italy in 1859 by the help of France. In 1866 Venetia was liberated.

The young Kingdom, in 1914 about the size of the State of Arizona, with 110,000 square miles of territory and a population of 36 million, found itself in its first years surrounded by a cordon of hatred and jealousy. This last debutante in the society of European states, was disliked by France because Italian soldiers opposed French soldiers who upheld the temporal power of the Pope. She was suspected by Germany because Garibaldi fought with France in 1871. She was hated by Austria—Austria the hovering hawk on the Italian Alps, because she wished to reconquer the two Italian provinces she had lost.

In this dangerous isolation Italy had to have allies or be snuffed out, so she entered as third partner in the secret alliance concluded by Germany and Austria in 1879. This triple alliance was accepted by the Italian people as a humiliating necessity. It was the last resort to prevent a declaration of war on the part of Austria, and to secure a breathing peace. The seventh article which bound this paradoxical Trio together provided that absolutely no territorial change should be allowed in the Balkan peninsula without the reciprocal consent of the powers

interested—namely, Austria and Italy. Austria, by her attack upon Serbia in 1914, not only acted against Italian interests, but also automatically annulled the secret treaty. Italy found herself righteously free and on August 2d, 1914, three days before England declared war upon Germany, decided for neutrality. What a momentous decision for France! At one o'clock the next morning the Italian Charge d'Affaires in Paris received the news. He immediately hurried to Viviani, President of the Council. Upon Italy's decision the fate of France depended. With unrestrained emotion the President read the telegram. He immediately ordered the mobilization of a million men from the southern frontiers on the German front. Italy's neutrality won the battle of the Marne and changed the history of the world.

What did this decision mean for Italy?

It meant preparation for war. For in her renunciation of her part in the Triple Alliance, Italy pledged herself to act in the interests of the nation alone and in any way civilization should demand. Italy is Latin. France is Latin, and the Latin races have always stood for international spirituality as against Teuton brutality. The die was cast. Germany knew the logical trend. Austria knew it and France and England knew it. Amid this new warfare of barbaric instruments, of a generation and a half of Teutonic intensive preparation Italy was almost superhumanly handicapped. Italy had just emerged two years before from a disastrous war with Turkey, in which she had been betrayed by

Austria and Germany. She had only two large guns of Krupp make. The guns that France was forging for her were commandeered for French emergency. She had no ammunition, no means of manufacturing any. In a military sense she was helpless, and to side with her future allies at that time would not only have been national suicide, but would have seriously handicapped the allied cause. War industries, almost non-existent, had to be improvised. Stout hearts, stalwart men, had to be commandeered. Patriotism had to be fanned to white heat. The pro-Germanic pacifists, bribed by Von Buelow, had to be overcome. Italy began to seethe with idealism. Unconsciously, at first, then with national conscience aglow, she was permeated with the belief that armed neutrality was a travesty at a time when the world was making its choice by nationalities whether right or might was the condition worth fighting for. "Is right more precious than peace?" was the question that men asked each other on the streets of Rome, Naples and Venice. This momentous question was answered in May, 1915, at a time when Russia was betrayed by the hirelings of the Hun in Petrograd and when the Austrian armies were in victorious pursuit. This declaration of war against Austria, made when Italy was not yet ready to fight, made when a further delay might have proved fatal to her new allies, made at the psychological moment when France and England called upon her to come in if she possibly could, made when she was only half prepared, created the second diversion that saved the day for civilization. It again proved that each heart in the Roman kingdom was indeed a champion for human right.

Now, having entered the war, what did it mean to Italy?

It meant first the renunciation of the bribe offered by Austria for a continued benevolent neutrality. When Von Buelow, a hitherto persona grata in the peninsula, hurried down to stiffen the vast system of Teuton intrigue that had permeated Italy during the thirty years of unnatural alliance, he presented the alluring vision of Malta, Nice, Corsica and Tunis under Italian rule. But Austrian diplomacy went further. To compensate for the violation of the agreement as to the Balkan

equilibrium, contained in the seventh article of the treaty, it conceded as the price for marking time:

1. The relinquishment of the greater part of the Trentino.
2. The adjustment of the eastern frontier in favor of a portion of the strategic requirements of Italy.
3. The proclamation of Trieste as a free city.

4. The possible surrender of certain islands on the Dalmatian coast.

5. The withdrawal of Austria from Albanian affairs, and the recognition of Italian sovereignty in Vallona.

But Italy was not to be bribed. Belgium had shown her in what high regard the Prussian Empire held treaties, and Austria had demonstrated in Serbia how sacred they were to her. These vague promises might be bait for gudgeon, but not for Italy, even if she had not been moved by the stifled cries of tortured humanity. She cast these bribes into the Teuton's teeth.

In 1912 Italy sold to the Central Empires 384 millions of lire of her excess productions. Neutrality could have doubled and tripled that revenue and made Italy rich. Italian agriculturalists did not hesitate to make the decision that impoverished them. It meant to Italy the assumption of an enormous debt. Up to the first of May, 1917, the war cost Italy 18.5 billions of lire. Since then the war has cost the nation a little over one billion a month. It meant the loss of 4 billion lire of German gold with which that industrial nation had for years forged the missing links in the successive processes of production and which she immediately withdrew, leaving behind worthless paper and national disorganization which resulted in the serious depreciation of the lire on exchange. That alone was a commercial catastrophe little understood in this country, and which will revive after the war unless American or English capitalists take the place of German economic expansion. It meant the creation of military establishments and arsenals, 66 in number that employ 35,000 hands. Private auxiliary establishments were created under direct government supervision numbering 950 with 400,000 hands; and also 1,200 other factories engaged in producing war material, employing 35,000 hands. As the best men had been called to the colors, the great majority

of these hands had to be intensively trained in improvised schools. As Italy produces no coal, and has to import 10 million tons a year at a price 100 per cent higher than five years ago, the price Italy pays for war is not small.

Now the world asks the question. "For what purpose did Italy go into this war?"

The fundamental reason for Italy's entering the war against the Central powers was that it is a war of democratic liberty, or national independence and of a humane civilization. The cleavage between the spirit of the Italian and that of the Hun is as sharp as it is between the American and the Hun, only the inhabitants of the United States have not personally experienced Teuton barbarity until within a year. In 1821 the Italian nation had become to all intents and purposes a secret society, sworn to resist all attempts at Germanization that Austria was forcing with physical and commercial murder upon the stricken people. The Italian watchwords were at that time "Away with the Barbarians!" "Death to the Germans!" Italy has not forgotten this. Outside of Italy, students of history know little of Austrian barbarity in that country. In the 19th century Austria's method of civilizing conquered Italy consisted of rape, soaking their victims in turpentine and burning them alive, crucifying children, burying patriots alive in quicklime, and countless murders for the most trivial causes. Italy has not forgotten these. It was most natural that she should side with Right against Might. So natural was it that before she entered the war thousands volunteered over the French border to fight their hereditary enemy. Then Italian martyrdom began to tell. These dead heroes inspired by the spirit of Garibaldi, enflamed the Italian populace to white heat. To them the unspeakable atrocities committed in Belgium became a clear vision. Had they not suffered like horrors of devilish government in Lombardy and Venetia, martyrdom in Dalmatia, untold cruelties in every portion of unredeemed Italy? No greater spiritual indignation ever swept a nation into war, not even the American nation, than that expressed by the common Italian people when with the battle cry of "Right against Might" they cried for war and stormed the

Austrian Alps. Our own war psychology interprets the depth of the Italian feeling. Italy entered the war with as high altruistic ideals as did the United States, but with an experience and knowledge of what the Hun is that we did not possess. She entered with purely humanitarian impulses.

But when in the war, Italy could not renounce her national egoism. Aside from her purely altruistic motives that governed her emotions, there poised steadfast before her vision the second principle that President Wilson laid down in his speech at a joint session of the two houses of Congress on February 11, 1918, a principle that meant to Italy her national existence. To ignore that fundamental principle of national unity would make Italy a traitor to herself. President Wilson said:

"Second—That peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power; but that

"Third—Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interests and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival states."

This principle of national determination is accepted by Italy as her secondary and yet most vital aim in this world war. Her claims are geographical, ethnological, defensive, clear, irrefutable. Let us see what they are:

In 1851 Lord Palmerston, in a note of protest against the German Confederation, because, asserting a claim to the basin of the Adige, it wanted "to add countries geographically divided from Germany," asserted in the face of Europe this static principle "Italy to the Brenner Alps."

In his memoirs Napoleon wrote: "Italy is bounded by the Alps and the sea; her natural limits are defined with as much precision as though she were an island." The summits of the Alps, forming a convex natural barrier around the peninsula, beginning at Ventimiglia, taking in Piedmont and Lombardy, gradually sloping down through Friuli, Istria and Dalmatia, were the natural boundaries assigned by the ancient Romans to their land.

They are as natural a boundary line as the Pyrrenees are to France and Spain, as the Andes are to Chile and Argentina. These summits divide the watersheds. On the northern side the tributaries of the Danube and the Rhine have their rise; on the southern side the Tessin, the Oglio, the Adda, Adige, the Brenta, the Piave and many other Italian streams and rivers have their birth. With the Alps as Italy's natural and geographical frontier, she is protected from invasion in that there are only three or four passes through which a foreign army could descend upon the plains. These passes can easily be fortified against invasion. An army corps is enough to guard them all. As it is, the great Austrian triangle in the Trentino slices into the throat of Italy and opens upon Italy at least thirty doors of attack. The main avenues of military descent are through Stelvio, past Giudicaria, by the Adige, past Ala, to the west of Asiago, and in the northeast between Bolsano and Brixen, to the Piave, menacing Venice.* At the present hour in every valley Austria holds the highest positions which she has strongly fortified, while Italy holds the lowlands, difficult to defend. Such a situation is impossible to a nation inheriting centuries of servitude and suffering, but with no loss of patriotic zeal to recover her boundaries and to effect her political union.

But Italy not only aspires to frontiers bounded geographically by the Alps, but the greater part of her frontiers are bounded by the sea. While Italy's head may be said to lift itself proudly towards the Alps, her lungs are the Adriatic and the Tyrrhenian seas. It needs only one glance at the map to see that without the Dalmatian coast and the Cursolari Islands the whole Italian coast line is as exposed to invasion as at Brescia, Verona and Venice with Austria dominating the Trentino. The whole Italian coast line from Venice to Otranto is low lying, without ports, anchorage or shelter from the north wind. Venice and Brindisi are her only ports, and these lie 1,300 kilometers apart. Moreover, neither is practicable for the modern superdreadnaught. The Cursolari Islands are nature's bridge between Dalmatia and Italy. Each peak is a signaling station. Behind each island lies a natural harbor, a

deep lurking base. The Dalmatian coast is like gigantic granite lace with hundreds of harbors, ports of refuge, natural bases of assault. The Adriatic is now an Austrian sea because Austria possesses the only natural bases that are each and all Italian in tradition, inheritance and sentiment.

Italy's aspirations in this war are not for conquest, but for the freedom of enslaved European nations and notably for her own. But she cannot aspire to national freedom without possessing the means of national safety. This the invaders of a hundred years have filched from her. It is not a question of conquest, but of national right and security. It is not natural that Italy having gone to war would be content to receive as the price of her spilled blood less than Austria offered as a bribe for benevolent neutrality. She scorned the bribe, but will demand the same as her inalienable right. So much in brief in regard to Italy's essential boundaries; but what of Italian Irredenta?

I will first consider the Trentino, which geographically includes to the north of it the upper Adige. Napoleon, in creating an Italic Kingdom included with its borders the Trentino and the Department of the Haut Adige, bordered by the crest of the Alps. This region reverted to the Austrians after his work was undone. This province is to Italy what Alsace and Lorraine are to France. The Trentino is the southern part of the mountainous basin of the Adige. It includes the broad lateral valleys that are historical feeders to the city of Trent. This ancient principality is, and always has been the centre of Italian language and sentiment within the whole territory of 6,330 square kilometers. The official Austrian census acknowledged this fact when it reported that out of 380,000 inhabitants 370,000 were Italians. In cities and towns where there were no garrisons, only one per cent were of alien Germanic blood. As a province Trentino has never ceased to revolt against its Austrian rulers and to turn its eyes southward for liberation.

Owing to the fact that the northern part of the Trentino, the Upper Adige, lies in a mountainous strategical position, next to the Austrian natural border, alien infiltration has been persistent and overwhelming. Chains of fortresses were built and manned. Cities and towns and passes were oc-

*This was written prior to the Italian Drive of November, 1918, which crushed Austria, driving her from Italy, redeeming the "Italian Irredenta," and resulting in the capitulation of Germany a few days later.

cupied. Previous to the war 180,000 Germans occupied the territory to forty or fifty thousand Italians. And yet that enslaved region was not Germanized in language. Romanized for two thousand years, even conquest could not overcome either the native tongue or native aspirations. Taking the Haut Adige and Trentino as a whole, as it naturally is, three quarters of its whole nationality is Italian and belongs by boundary, blood and right to Italy.

If I had space I could write pages of the fair cities, picturesque towns in that great captured triangle known to geographers as Venetia Tridentina. Each offers irrefutable claims to be part of its motherland in architecture, customs and speech. Rovereto and Riva have that exquisite character peculiar to Venice. Italianism breathes in each school, in the facial lines of houses and churches, in the unmistakable art of Ala, Arco, Cavalese, Predazzo, and a hundred other tiny cities of the Trentino. Each an Italian picture of its own.

From behind the veil of Austrian lies the average tourist looked upon the fair region as the "Southern Tyrol." Baedeker is German. It was only thoughtful historic insight and also the war that could uncover a deathless, ever-revolting Italian nationalism that prayed and schemed for freedom from its hereditary oppressors. And now the hour has struck. The intellectual and political aspirations of the Trentino, hitherto suffocated, will have their full reward. Patriots, familiar with torture and dungeons will know the Austrian no more as an interloper, but only as an undesirable neighbor beyond the Alps. The Trentino and the Upper Adige will naturally revert to Italy not as a price of war, but as a restitution.

Italy has no thirst for conquest, but like a Roman mother, she will gather back to her bosom her children who through years of uncounted misery have bewailed their separation. After a thousand years of Austrian domination, in spite of persistent Germanization, in spite of centuries of despair, in spite of the wearing down of the fine edge of sentiment, we have a people clamoring for the right of a free choice to be admitted into the Roman family. They cry that the monstrous weight of centuries of slavery be forever lifted. By the cataracts of the

Adige bounding toward the sun, by the prayers of an enslaved people, by the justice that will be dealt out when this war is won, this reparation will be accomplished.

I will now consider Julian Venetia, which includes within its borders the question of Eastern Friuli, Gorizia, Trieste and Istria. The last river that rises from the gorges of the eastern end of the Alps, and defines her natural limits is the Isonzo, which empties into the Gulf of Trieste.

This river receives on its left bank two tributaries, the Idria and the Vipacco, whose sources determine the natural eastern boundaries of northern Italy. The territory within these two tributaries includes the scene of some of the fiercest and most violent fighting in this war. It takes in the plateau of the Carso, the towns of Tolmino, Canale, Gorizia, Gradisca, Montefalcone, Aquileia, Grado and San Giovanni—all Italian in name, architecture and feeling. To the north, in the Julian Alps, are the two mountain passes, almost impossible to storm, easy to defend, through which the Austrian hordes made their inroads—the Plezzo pass, known as the "Key to Italy," and eastward, the Prevaldo pass called "The Main Gate of Italy." Only a predetermined foe or conqueror could refuse this defensive Italian land to its mother state.

Since 1500 Gorizia and Aquileia, the mother of Venice, have been under foreign rule. Both from their earliest history are basically Italian. After four centuries of annexation they are as Italian in language, sentiment and architecture as Rome. The whole territory of Friuli, the plain of Carso and Istria were Roman two hundred years before Christ. It was under the domination of the Venitian Republic and the Patriarchs of Aquileia before the Hapsburgs filched it. Auerbach well put the case when he said: "Venice, by her civilization, and her arts, has implanted Italianism all along the eastern facade of the Adriatic." All this region, including Trieste and its territory, Goritz and Gradisca, and Istria have 872,000 inhabitants, of which, in spite of all Austrian disguises, 358,000, or 43 per cent, claim Italian nationality. The balance is divided between 267,000 Slovenes and 171,000 Serbo-Croats, who by their diversity and the fact that they were to a great extent

forced immigrants, can in no way counter balance the intellectual or economic influence of the Italian elements.

The United States, through its members of Congress, elected by the free American people have declared that Austria, the catspaw of Germany must be destroyed. President Wilson has indicated that she must be dismembered. As important as Antwerp to Belgium is the port of Trieste to Italy. Germany has long schemed for Trieste as an integral part of her political and economic conquest of the Levant and the far East. As a port Austria has made comparatively little use of it. As a political bridgehead it is vital to Austria in her domination of the Adriatic. The question is to be met fairly. Is the Adriatic to be an Austrian or an Italian sea when the war is over? If Austrian, then Italy has shed her blood in vain. Only 27 per cent of Austrian maritime trade has passed through Trieste to 63 per cent through Hamburg and Bremen. Through it only 21 per cent of the total imports passed and 18 per cent of the exports.

It is not for commercial purposes, but for an ambitious Teutonic policy to menace Italy and control the Mediterranean that Austria holds this important base. After centuries of alien domination, independent fighting, freedom, the reversion to Austria in 1815 through the Congress of Vienna, Trieste has maintained a living, aggressive hostility to Germanization. Examples of this hatred might be quoted by the score. The Italian flag has never been concealed in Trieste. When in 1869 the new Italian kingdom was born, the inhabitants of Trieste proclaimed to Victor Emmanuel that all united Italians "Should have constantly before their eyes and in their hearts the cause of their brothers, deprived of the joys of freedom."

The last census of 1810 proves the Italian nationality of the city. There were 118,959 Italians and 29,439 Italian citizens, to 11,856 Germans, 56,916 Slovenes and 2,403 Serbo-Croats. Since 1866 Austria has flooded this Adriatic littoral with Slavs and Slovenes in her attempt at denaturing the original Italian element. To submerge latinism by shameless and forced immigration has been her base policy. She has done to the Littoral what Germany did to Alsace and Lorraine. She

superimposed the Slavic tongue as the official language. She subsidized slavish schools. She altered Italian names on civil registers. Even the clergy was ordered to introduce the Slavic liturgy in the churches; but this the Pope refused to sanction. These peasants, imported from Carniola, from Styria, from Carinthia, fishermen and tillers of the soil, of intellectual inferiority, have through military force and iniquitous law assumed an economic and political preponderance over the Istrian peninsula. It is as if the Italian settlement of 600,000 in New York City or the 1,500,000 Hebrews were to assume the hegemony of the state. The absolute "Slavization" of the government offices in Trieste and in all the cities of the Julian region, completed the final enslavement of the Italian population. This artificial infiltration imposed upon this whole territory so infuriated the native element that when Italy entered the war thousands of the irredentists from Friuli, Gorizia, Istria and Trieste deserted into Italy and enlisted en masse. Since the war began Austria has imposed over three hundred death sentences in Trieste alone. The whole Julian region has given more heroes and martyrs to the cause of freedom than any other part of Italy.

The three ports, Venice, Trieste, Fiume, control the strategical future and economic life of the Latin sea. Two of these are still Austrian. Which is the natural maritime power—Austria or Italy? Which is the nation of sailors? Which nation represents the freedom of the seas, the international opportunity of commerce? The nation that possesses Trieste and Fiume is mistress of the Adriatic.

Fiume lies within the Julian Alps, that natural boundary that terminates near Portor, opposite the island of Veglia. For many centuries it has been an international football, tossed from one ownership to another. The town itself is old Roman and was destroyed by Charlemagne. It was once a fief of the Patriarchate of Aquileia. It belonged to Venice for one year. Finally it went over to the control of Austria. Maria Teresa in 1776 made it a present to Hungary. In 1848 the Croations took possession. Again it was restored to Hungary, and today it is governed by "provisional statute" whatever that may mean. No one knows to whom at the present time

this property of several square kilometers belongs. But we do know, that in spite of all barterings, vicissitudes, this plaything of the powers has retained its Italian character. It has ever aspired to be a part of the Italian kingdom. Of its diverse population, sixty-five per cent are Italian, and a plebiscite would quickly decide the national determination of the city.

And yet Italy recognizes that the only legitimate claim besides hers is Croatian. This small country of a population of a little over two and a half millions calls for a port of outlet. Were the future independence of Croatia assured, even then she would be demanding a strategical position out of all proportion to her real needs. In 1912 the total imports and exports out of the harbor of Fiume reached a total of 3,882,103 tons, of which Croatia was only responsible for four per cent.

There are only two routes from central Europe to the East, that golden East that is the vision of the Teutonic Empire. The one crosses the Balkan peninsula, and either through Solonika or Constantinople becomes the Berlin-Bagdad express. The other leads through Trieste or Fiume, via the Adriatic. The United States has vowed to shatter this Germanic dream.

Fiume can never again belong to Austria, nor to Croatia, unable to defend its vast opportunity. It must either be a part of Italy or become a free port. If the Allies, at the peace table, barring all Teutonic outlet on the Adriatic, should decide this momentous question in the favor of a free port, as Constantinople should be, then I do not think that Italy would say "Nay". If a popular vote of Fiume should decide this question, there would be only one patriotic answer. It is to be remembered that Croatia has already a port in Segna, 50 kilometers south of Fiume, that could more than meet the demands of Croatian shipping. Italy will never dispute Croatia's right to an outlet on the sea. When the war is over, the Adriatic will have its just rulers. With them Italy will join hands in a common purpose to maintain the right of national aspirations. But whatever happens Trieste and Fiume must be eternally protected from the Hun. Italy will protect Trieste. She can protect Fiume. So can the allied

powers in making it a free port, if they so determine.

The coast state of Dalmatia is separated geographically from Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Dinaric Alps. This natural barrier is an extension of the Julian Alps and, therefore, the direct geological continuation of the pre-alpine zone of the Venetian Alps. Mountain ranges are the natural political frontiers of nations. Physical geography has been recognized as a final argument in adjudicating disputed boundary lines. But, besides this unanswerable physical fact, Dalmatia has been Roman for 2,000 years, since Octavius "civilized" the brigand Ilirians who occupied this coast country. Dalmatia subsequently gave to Rome four emperors. One of these, Diocletian, founded Spalato, the most impregnable harbor on the Dalmatian coast. Indeed this littoral fairly exhales Roman life. Why should it not after eighteen hundred years of Italian life? As I write I have before me photographs of Roman ruins, Roman palaces, Roman domes, Roman arches surmounted by the winged lions of the Republic of Venice, lions which the barbarians could not wholly subdue, only mutilate.

Here is the cathedral at Severnico, the palace of Diocletian at Spalato, the palace of the Rectors at Ragusa. Dalmatia gave to Italy Fortunio, its first grammarian; Elio Saraca, the great Italian physician of the Seventeenth Century, Ugo Foscolo, one of Italy's greatest poets, and the works of the notable architect, Giorgio Orsini. For centuries Italy bound Dalmatia to western civilization, nor will she renounce the fruits of her art, her genius, her centuries of intellectual overlordship for the mere fact that of 620,000 mixed inhabitants 160,000 are Italians with their hearts fixed on Rome. These are the original proprietors of the land, inheritors of the spirit of Italy. Shall the spirit of the Kaiser working through his subject, the Croates, the spirit of vindictive denaturalization, or that of Italy, the liberator, rule this important line of coast? Civilization sees only one possible answer.

I do not need to mention again the strategic importance of Dalmatia. The key of the Adriatic is Cattaro. This commands the Dalmatian archipelago,

which commands Pola, which in turn commands Trieste. There can never be peace with two masters in the Adriatic. The power that possesses the eastern coast is lord of the western coast. Tallyrand affirmed this self evident fact. Without the complete control of the Adriatic, Italy is a suppliant slave.

Nor does she ask more than to round out her little kingdom to its natural, geographical borders that I have described in order that, like Switzerland, she may be strong and independent of the whims of border powers. Even then the kingdom will have no more territory than the states of Arizona and Rhode Island combined. Is this imperialism? Can hostile propaganda in these United States fool a fair minded people by the claim that Italy went into this war from imperialistic motives, when she went in to liberate, not to enslave; to free her own people agonizing under the heel of a predatory and brutal government? A plain statement of fact is enough to disconcert the Hun. I absolutely deny any existence whatsoever of the least taint of conquest in any of the Italian aims for entering this war. As I said at the beginning, imperialism grows on conquest and exists on despotism. There can be no empire making without these two basic qualifications. Italy only wishes to gather under her wings her brood of stolen chicks, beaten, starving, poor little plucked provinces, and mother them into strength and happiness. How dastardly to call that maternal longing imperialistic!

President Wilson's words reverberate in Italian ears. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" rings in every soldier's ears. We are willing, if need be, to send then millions of fighters to Europe to make men free. Belgium, France, Serbia, Roumania, are not the only nations enslaved by the Hun. Italy is one, as much so as France; and the restoration of Italia Irredenta and the strategic coast of the northern Adriatic to Italy is as much a sacred promise of the United States as it is a national Italian necessity.

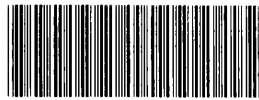
Compared with England, France, and even the United States, Italy cannot be said to have a colonial empire. Great Britain with an island popula-

tion of a little over 46 millions, holds two dependencies in Europe, 11 in Asia, 19 in Africa, 23 in America and 10 in Australasia, with a total population of 437,947,432 within 13,745,766 square miles of territory. France with a population of 47,830,581 administers colonies with a population of 47,830,581 and 4,776,032 square miles of territory. The colonies of the United States have a population of 9,138,006 with 125,344 square miles of territory. The Philippines are densely populated. Germany held colonies in Africa with a population of 13,419,500 and 931,460 square miles, and in Asia with a population of 168,900 and 200 square miles. This she filched from China. On the Pacific she had 96,160 square miles of islands with a population of 357,800.

Italy's total colonial possessions lie in Africa. These are Lybia (including Tripolitania and Cirenaica), Eritrea and Somaliland. Owing to its barbaric nature the size and population of the latter is unknown. Lybia has a population of about a million. Its size is approximately 1,033,000 square kilometers. Eritrea has a population of 2,830,000 with an approximate area of 1,160,000 square kilometers. Italy cannot be called in any sense a land grabber, for the greater part of her colonial territory is wild, underpeopled, barbaric, unproductive. Her colonies are a liability, not an asset.

I have given these dry figures so that at a glance the charge of imperialism, outside of her borders, as within, could be disproved. The spirit of modern Rome is to civilize, not to torture, to free, not to enslave. If it should happen that at the peace table a new colonial distribution should take place, a new adjustment of territories should be made, Italy will accept her share without making a demand. To believe for a moment that the Hun should ever be allowed again to exploit, flay, murder helpless nations is to deny the part of the United States as a spiritual belligerent in this war. Italy yields to none of her allies in her unselfish participation. She will spend her last drop of blood, her last lire to cut out the claws of the German beast that Europe may be free. This Freedom must include herself.

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